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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 19, 2010

Summary: Coverage of U.S. Special Representative Holbrooke's Islamabad visit received extensive coverage both in electronic and print media. Newspapers highlighted his meetings with top Pakistani civilian and military leaders, and his assurance that "Pakistan will get \$349 million of Coalition Support Funds (CSF) within a week or so." Media also reported that a Congressional delegation led by Representative Schiff called on President Zardari, and discussed U.S.-Pak bilateral ties. Reports of a bomb blast in Tirah valley of Khyber Agency killing 30 people including a militant commander and a U.S. drone strike that killed four militants in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) received wide coverage. Several major dailies displayed reports prominently that two Taliban "shadow governors" of Afghan provinces, and a key aide of Usama Bin Laden were detained in Pakistan. The U.S. support to build a road in South Waziristan to "provide lifelines for development activities and commerce" for people living in FATA garnered media coverage. Several newspapers and TV networks reported that the U.S. Mission in Pakistan has introduced new online visa forms for non-immigrants from February 22, 2010. Reports and photographs of induction of the first squadron of indigenously manufactured aircraft, JF-17 Thunder, into the Pakistan Air Force received extensive coverage. Nearly all mainstream newspapers ran editorials on recent judicial crisis that was amicably resolved with PM Gilani's declaration to accept Chief Justice Chaudhry's recommendations regarding judges' appointment.
End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Pakistan To Get \$349m Within Few Days: Holbrooke - "The News," "Dawn" (02/19)

"U.S. President's special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke said that \$349 million of Pakistan's blocked Coalition Support Funds (CSF) dues would be released 'within a week or so,' explaining that the release only awaited an approval from Congress 'which was a routine matter,' while talking to a group of newspaper editors and columnists in Islamabad."

News Story: PM Stresses Immediate Disbursement Of CSF - "The News" (02/19)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday underlined the expeditious initiation of the Pakistan-United States strategic dialogue for building trust to remove the misperceptions and misgivings between Pakistan and the United States, while talking to U.S. envoy Holbrooke, Special U.S. Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan who along with a delegation called on him at the Prime Minister House. Prime Minister noted with concern that the delay in disbursement of CSF and the release of the appropriated amount under

the Kerry-Lugar Bill to Pakistan were adversely affecting Pakistan's overall economy."

News Story: Pakistan, U.S. Need To Work More Closely, Says Zardari - "Daily Times" (02/19)

"Pakistan and the U.S. need to work more closely in order to broaden the spectrum of cooperation for the pursuits of common goals, President Asif Ali Zardari said on Thursday, adding Pakistan looked forward to high-level strategic dialogue between the two countries next month in Washington. Zardari was talking to U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, who called on him at the Presidency.... Separately, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani also met Holbrooke and stressed the initiation of the Pakistan-U.S. strategic dialogue as soon as possible for building trust between the two countries.... Meanwhile, Holbrooke told reporters that improved collaboration between Pakistan and the U.S. led to recent successes against the Taliban, including the capture of the group's number two man. 'It is significant in and of itself. Very significant,' he said. 'It represents another high watermark for Pakistani and U.S. collaboration.'"

News Story: Zardari Asks U.S. To Stop Screening Pakistanis At Airports - "Dawn" (02/19)

"Pakistan has asked the United States to take it out of the list of countries for whose citizens screening at airports has been made mandatory. President Asif Ali Zardari raised the issue during separate meetings on Thursday with Richard L. Armitage and Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan."

News Story: Pak Shows Concern Over Effects Of NATO Assault - "The Nation" (02/19)

"The U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, on Thursday assured political leadership of Pakistan that his country would provide all possible assistance to Pakistan in strengthening of democracy, security, socio-economic development and welfare of its people. This he said while talking to President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif during his separate meetings with them in Islamabad."

News Story: Holbrooke Calls On Kayani - "The News" (02/19)

"U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke called on Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and discussed various affairs relating war against terrorism, Geo News reported late Thursday. According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), both the leaders mulled over various issues including bilateral relations, regional situation and war against terrorism."

News Story: Indian Stance On Talks Not Encouraging, U.S. told - "The News" (02/19)

"Pakistan made it clear to the United States that despite the challenging role that it was facing in the region, 'the vibes emanating from New Delhi have not been encouraging' in the context of resumption of the Composite Dialogue process. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, President Asif Ali Zardari, PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif and Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir, all impressed upon U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke, in their separate meetings, how vital it was for New Delhi to remain engaged in the dialogue process."

News Story: Only Obama Can Free Dr. Aafia: Holbrooke - "The News" (02/19)

"U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke has said that U.S. President Barack Obama can release Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, but for it she would have to file a mercy petition to the President through the Justice Department. Talking to senior newspapers editors in Islamabad at the U.S. Embassy on Thursday evening, Holbrooke said that he is well aware of the sentiments of the Pakistani people regarding release and repatriation of Dr. Aafia but our courts are autonomous and independent and only President Obama can release her."

News Story: Zardari Asks U.S. To Play Its Role For Pak Stability - "The News" (02/19)

"President Asif Ali Zardari Thursday said Pakistan needs a Marshall Plan for overcoming economic problems that had suffered a huge loss of over \$35 billion during the last eight years as a result of the fight against militancy and terrorism. A U.S. Congressional delegation led by Representative Adam Schiff, member House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, called on President Zardari at the Presidency on Thursday. Matters regarding Pak-U.S. bilateral relations, reimbursements of Coalition Support Fund arrears, fight against militancy and terrorism, the new U.S. screening regime and security situation in the region were discussed during the meeting."

News Story: President Underscores Pakistan's Role For Regional Peace - "Daily Times" (02/19)

"For the prosperity of the region, it is imperative that Pakistan and India should bridge the gap and return to the negotiating table to resolve of their bilateral issues meaningfully, President Asif Ali Zardari said on Thursday. He was talking to former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage, who called on him at the Presidency. According to a press release, matters relating to the war on terror, Pak-U.S. relations, mutual cooperation and the regional political situation were discussed during the meeting."

News Story: Nawaz For U.S. Investment In Power, Agriculture Sectors - "Business Recorder" (02/19)

"Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chief, Nawaz Sharif, has urged U.S. to invest in Pakistan especially in power and agriculture sectors. He made the demands in a meeting with Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Special Representative for Pakistan & Afghanistan, at Punjab House in Lahore on Thursday."

News Story: 7 Militants Among 30 Killed In Tirah Blast - "Dawn" (02/19)

"A militant commander and 29 people were killed and 80 others were injured when a bomb exploded in a cattle market in Tirah valley of Khyber Agency on Thursday. The commander was identified as Azam Khan of Lashkar-i-Islam. His six bodyguards also died, according to sources."

News Story: Two Afghan Taliban Leaders Captured - "The News" (02/19)

"Two senior Taliban militants have been captured in Pakistan after the insurgents' military commander was arrested only days earlier, the New York Times reported on Thursday, citing Afghan officials. The two men detained had served as 'shadow governors' for two northern provinces in Afghanistan as part of the Taliban's effort to undermine the Kabul government's authority, the newspaper said."

News Story: U.S. Financing Construction Of Tank-Makeen Road - "Business Recorder," "Express" (02/19)

"The U.S. is financing the construction of the important Tank-Makeen road through the FATA Secretariat under the December 31, 2009 Implementation Letter pledging USAID infrastructure support in South Waziristan. 'The U.S. is working with Pakistan government to deliver much needed infrastructure and services to the people in FATA,' said Ambassador Robin Raphel, Coordinator for Economic and Development Assistance, adding, 'We want to move quickly, so people can use the road for transportation and much needed commerce.'"

News Story: Online forms for U.S. visas - "The News," "Dawn," "Business Recorder" "Jinnah," "Pakistan," "Aaj Kal" (02/19)

"The U.S. Embassy, Islamabad, and U.S. Consulate, Karachi, will require non-immigrant visa applicants to use a new web-based application form starting February 22, 2010, says a press release. The new DS-160 application form incorporates all existing applications into one interactive, online form, replacing the forms that currently make up the Electronic Visa Application and Parental Information Forms."

News Story: JF-17 Thunder Joins PAF's Fighter Fleet - "Dawn"
(02/19)

"The first squadron of JF-17 Thunder aircraft formally joined the fighter fleet of Pakistan Air Force on Thursday. 'The formal induction of JF-17 aircraft in the PAF is in line with our resolve to face all challenges with poise and self-confidence,' Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman said while speaking at the induction ceremony held at a PAF operational base."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Obama Briefed On Pakistan-Afghan Situation - "Dawn"
(02/19)

"U.S. President Barack Obama has reviewed the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan with his senior officials and diplomats as his administration continues a two-pronged offensive to subdue militants in that region. The new approach includes a major military offensive in southern Afghanistan and a U.S.-led process to encourage repentant Taliban activists to join the Afghan mainstream. Diplomatic sources in Washington told 'Dawn' that U.S. and Pakistani officials were also looking at the possibility of using the arrested Afghan Taliban commander - Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar to expedite the reintegration process."

News Story: NATO Needs A Month To Secure Marjah - "The Nation"
(02/19)

"A U.S.-led offensive in southern Afghanistan moved at a cautious pace Thursday as allied troops sought to spare civilian casualties and avoid numerous roadside bombs planted by the Taliban. NATO and Afghan troops have hit pockets of stiff resistance as they assault the Taliban's main stronghold in southern Afghanistan and may need another month to secure the area, a NATO commander said on Thursday."

News Story: U.S. Forces Take Control Of Marjah - "Daily Times"
(02/19)

"U.S. and Afghan forces have taken control of the main roads, bridges and government centers of the Taliban haven of Marjah, the top Marine Commander in southern Afghanistan Brigadier General Larry Nicholson said on Thursday, though he added that pockets of insurgents remain."

News Story: Key Osama Aide Among 9 Terrorists Held In Karachi - "Daily Times" (02/19)

"Pakistani intelligence agencies and their U.S. counterparts have arrested at least nine terrorists in separate raids in Karachi, including a top al Qaeda leader, Abu Reyan Al-Zarkazi, believed to be a key aide of Osama Bin Laden. The suspects were shifted to Islamabad for interrogation.... The sources said six others, including five foreigners, had also been arrested from different parts of the city. Communications intercepted by U.S. authorities played a key role in tracking and arresting the suspects, who were in Karachi buying bomb-making equipment, the officials said."

News Story: Haqqani's Son Among Four Killed In NWA Drone Strike - "Daily Times" (02/19)

"Four Taliban, including Taliban commander Muhammad Haqqani, son of Jalaluddin Haqqani, were killed when U.S. drones fired two missiles in North Waziristan on Thursday, a private TV channel reported."

News Story: Mullah Baradar's Arrest Not Due To U.S. Pressure: Qureshi - "Daily Times" (02/19)

"Pakistan's arrest of an Afghan Taliban commander was not made under pressure from the U.S. and shows Islamabad's sincerity to the fight against terrorism, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Thursday. 'We have done it because it is in our interests to do so,' Qureshi told Reuters on the sidelines of a security conference in Belgium."

News Story: Pakistan Shows Action With Baradar's Arrest, Eyes Talks

- "Daily Times" (02/19)

"The arrest in Pakistan of a top Afghan Taliban commander should bolster Pakistan's position as it maneuvers to play a leading role in any Afghan peace process, but probably does not signal a fundamental Pakistani policy shift. 'What they want to do is assuage the reservations and fears of the international community and to have a stronger bargaining position with respect to developments in Afghanistan,' said Khadim Hussain of the Aryana Institute think tank."

News Story: U.S. Drone Kills Four Militants In NWA - "The News" (02/19)

"Four local militants were killed when the U.S. unmanned planes hit a van in Danday Darpakhel village in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) on Thursday, tribal sources said."

News Story: Several Militants Killed As Forces Hit Targets In Bajaur - "The News" (02/19)

"Several militants were reportedly killed and dozens of their hideouts destroyed when helicopter gunships blitzed various areas in Nawagai Tehsil of Bajaur Agency, official sources said on Thursday."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: India's Insistence On Security To Limit Dialogue: Qureshi - "Dawn" (02/19)

"Talks with India will not make the required progress if New Delhi insists on focusing on security, Pakistan said on Thursday. Foreign secretaries of the two countries are to meet in New Delhi on February 25 after India this month offered to hold high-level talks. Why this focus on terrorism? How can we have good relations if we just ignore the outstanding issues like Kashmir? Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said. 'That's an ostrich mentality.'"

News Story: U.S.-Sponsored Indo-Pak Dialogue To Prove Dud - "Dawn" (02/19)

"New Delhi and Islamabad cannot resolve all their 'standing and outstanding' issues until both stop holding dialogue on the agenda of American and Western imperialism. This was stated by Tappan Bhoss, Indian chapter General Secretary of the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPPFD), at a news conference at Lahore Press Club on Thursday."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: USAID To Help Punjab Set Up Centre Of Excellence For Mangoes - "Business Recorder" (02/19)

"The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will help the Punjab government in setting up a 'Centre of Excellence for Mangoes' in the province with a view to carry out research and extension work simultaneously for increasing its exports. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two parties is going to be signed shortly in this regard. This was disclosed by the Special Secretary Agriculture Marketing, Tahir Khurshid while speaking with a select group of newsmen at a session arranged by the USAID in Lahore on Thursday."

News Story: Automated Traffic Signals: U.S. Firm To Brief CDA On Proposal Next Week - "Daily Times" (02/19)

"A U.S.-based company interested in securing the contract of installation of computerized traffic signals in the city will brief the CDA Board on its proposal of easing growing traffic congestion through introduction of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) next week. According to the official spokesperson for the CDA, Ramzan Sajid, the contract in question will be awarded to the firm, Econolite, in case of the proposal's approval by the CDA Board headed by Chairman Imtiaz Inayat Elahi."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: At Least 52 People Feared Dead As Avalanche Hits Village
- "Dawn" (02/19)

"At least 52 people were feared dead and scores of others injured when an avalanche slammed into a remote hamlet in Kandian Tehsil of Kohistan district late on Wednesday night. Inclement weather hampered rescue work in the mountainous area of Saroo in Bagro Dara. Local people retrieved bodies and injured from a number of houses buried under snow."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Stemming The Tide Of Anti-Americanism, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (02/19)

"U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry has arrived in Pakistan to hold talks with the government and military leaders. While talking to Gilani, Kerry assured him that Washington and Islamabad would jointly identify 'highly visible projects,' which would then be undertaken with U.S. assistance.... In his meeting with Gilani, Kerry welcomed the government's proposal for setting up medical facilities in the militancy-hit areas and strengthening the energy sector for overcoming power shortages. The agreement by Kerry is being interpreted as a major shift in Washington's strategy, which had hitherto felt shy of funding large development projects. The U.S. has understandably agreed to Pakistan's proposal, as it hopes this would help stem the tide of rising anti-Americanism and improve U.S. image. Washington has also tripled its development assistance for Pakistan for the same purpose."

Editorial: A Major Capture, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (02/19)

"For Pakistan, the arrest of Baradar is another major success in its war on terror. It shows that it is serious in its efforts to arrest the leadership of Taliban. The capture of Baradar highlights the growing coordination and cooperation between Pakistani and the U.S. intelligence agencies. This is a positive development that serves the cause of both countries and the region as a whole. Pakistan has had a uniform policy regarding Afghan Taliban since it started following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. It is not the first Taliban leader arrested by Pakistani security forces. Earlier many top Taliban commanders, including Mullah Dadullah, Mullah Akhtar Usmani, former Taliban defense minister Mullah Obaidullah and others have either been killed or arrested because of direct or indirect involvement of Pakistani security agencies."

Editorial: Helplessness Of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (02/19)

"Due to stiff resistance from the Taliban, the coalition forces are feeling helpless in their ongoing military offensive in the Helmand province and have failed, at least for the time being, in occupying the town of Marjah, considered the stronghold of the resistance movement. However, the innocent Afghan citizens in the area are being killed in the NATO military operation. Nevertheless, steadfastness of the Taliban against the military might of coalition forces validates all the predictions about the failure of this operation."

Editorial: Composite Dialogue Only, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/19)

"Why do the Pakistani policy makers continue to pussyfoot around India. The Indian External Affairs Minister, Krishna, has categorically stated that India will not resume the composite dialogue but will only talk to Pakistan on terrorism.... Pakistan seems to have put itself under pressure and instead of coming out with a clear cut response to Krishna's statement, has asked India to clarify its position. What is there to clarify?... Instead, the Pakistanis are whimpering away and as usual are without any clear cut position on the issue. Of course, the U.S. pressure is also there; but the U.S. has its own interests and it is time Pakistan asserted its vital interests. Fear of a negative Indian reaction should be overcome by the Foreign Office and the political

leadership.... If India now is under pressure to resume dialogue with Pakistan, we must ensure that it is a meaningful dialogue premised on the composite talks formula which has already been agreed to by both sides."

Editorial: Talks And The Indian Attitude, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/19)

"Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna has said that there will be informal talks between Pakistan and India on February 25 and not a composite dialogue. He, however, said that we are willing to remove Pakistan's reservations vis-`-vis the talks.... India wants to have dialogue with Pakistan on the topics of its own choosing in order to increase pressure on Pakistan. If India restricts the talks to the issues of its liking then Pakistan should discuss its reservations with India. Unless India changes the talks into a composite dialogue there is no use of restricting ourselves to dialogue on terrorism only."

Editorial: Indian Refusal For Composite Dialogue, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (02/19)

"In fact India does not want to hold composite dialogue with Pakistan. Evading talks on Kashmir is the Indian policy and it does not want to discuss water issue with Pakistan either. India is bent upon violating Indus Basin Treaty and UN resolutions on Kashmir.... Pakistan should send diplomats to America, U.K. and other countries to apprise them about Indian obstinacy."

Editorial: Indian Attempt To Run Away From Talks, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (02/19)

"Indian Foreign Minister has said that the Indo-Pak Foreign Secretary-level talks would only be on terrorism and that India is not resuming the composite dialogue process.... Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmud Qureshi has said that talks should not be limited to terrorism, but all issues must be made part of the agenda. The Foreign Office has expressed concern over the Indian Foreign Minister's remarks. The need is for Pakistan to remain firm on its stand of having composite dialogue; it should make the international community realize that India is using excuses to get out of the talks. It is true that a one-point agenda would not help the peace process."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson